

Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG) Meeting #10

Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Avenue
40th Floor, Conference Room 4050/4060
February 22, 2008 8:00 – 10:00 am

Meeting Summary

Attendance

Bea Kumasaka, Brian Johnston, Celeste Gilman, Charles Redmond, James Bush, Jim Schultz, Jean Healy, Kate Martin, Paul Niebanck, Paulo Nunes-Ueno, Randy Earl, Rebecca Deehr, Richard Staudt, Rob Kaufman, Tony Gomez

Staff: Barbara Gray, Katherine Bush, Wayne Wentz, Susan Sánchez, Susan Mueller, Tracy Krawczyk, Megan Hoyt, Traci Ratzliff, and Benita Horn (facilitator)

The meeting was facilitated by Co-Chairs, Rebecca Deehr and Paulo Nunes-Ueno

Public Comment

No public comments

Co-chair Report

- Rebecca and Barbara attended the Seattle Design Commission (SDC) to provide an update on the Pedestrian Master Plan, specifically the process, timeline and public engagement strategy. Members of the SDC appreciated the goal of reaching underrepresented communities and the diversity of the PMPAG. Specific feedback from the SDC is included in the 2/22 staff report that was distributed at this meeting.
- The new members of the Seattle City Council Pedestrian Safety Committee (Tim Burgess and Sally Clark) were introduced. Councilmember Burgess sat in on the PMPAG meeting and was recognized by the co-chairs.
- Paulo met with Rachel Smith in the Mayor's Office to discuss tying messages of the Climate Action Now Initiative and the Pedestrian Master Plan. The completion of the Home Conservation Campaign that has been a key focus of the Climate Action Now Initiative will result in more attention to transportation issues, such as the Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Rebecca mentioned that she will continue to update the PMPAG about the progress made on the Pedestrian Safety and Public Awareness Campaign.
- Paulo introduced Randy Earl, newest member of the PMPAG. Randy is replacing Steve Marquardt. Randy has worked as a counselor and does advocacy work for people that use wheelchairs. As a person who has walked, used a cane, crutches and now a wheelchair, he will be able to provide a valuable perspective to the City as a member of the PMPAG. Randy current resides in Pioneer Square.

Staff Report

Barbara Gray distributed a hard copy of the SDOT Staff Report that covered updates on a number of topics including announcing the first annual Bridging the Gap annual report, the selection of the 2008 Safe Routes to School program schools, and a recap of community meetings that staff attended in February.

Consultant Report

Peg Staeheli (SvR Design Company) provided the consultant report. The highlights include:

- SvR is beginning one-on-one interviews with PMPAG members. Her intent is to hear each PMPAG member's goals and vision and their top two or three issue or concerns.
- The Project Plan, which will include consultant team roles, agency role, related work by others, major deliverables and schedule. The Project Plan will be distributed to the Steering Committee at the March 17th meeting and to the full PMPAG in advance of the March meeting.
- SvR will develop a best practices roadmap. This will list in a graphic format the national and international best practices. It will highlight pedestrian policies and other treatments that have been successful in other places.
- Space Syntax LTD will conduct an analysis of in four Seattle neighborhoods to support the Pedestrian Master Plan effort. The analysis will provide a unique resource that takes into account pedestrian volumes, land use, traffic patterns and collision rates. Peg mentioned that the four neighborhoods have not yet been selected.

Comments:

- It was asked if the study will look at why pedestrians don't use certain intersections. This specific study will not but we should get that information through other mechanisms.
- Want to make sure the methodology allows for the study of neighborhoods without sidewalks (e.g., areas north of 85th Street)
- It was asked if the model will be able to control for different environments. SvR will be able to make necessary controls by utilizing the City's GIS database.
- A request was made that the information gathered in the one-on-one interviews would be a very useful resource to the rest of the PMPAG and should be made available.

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Presentation

Paul Niebanck gave a presentation about the role of the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB), specifically their role in relation to the Pedestrian Master Plan. The SPAB consist of about 12 members that each serve a two year term that can be renewed for an additional term. The group meets on the second Wednesday of every month in the City Hall Boards and Commissions Room (on the L2 level) and their meetings are open to the public (Note: if you plan to attend the SPAB meeting, be aware that the doors to City Hall close 6pm). Meeting agendas and minutes are available on the SPAB website: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/spab/>

Paul provided an overview of an exercise that he did with the SPAB at their February meeting. Based on that exercise, the SPAB encourages the development of a Pedestrian Master Plan that has the following characteristics:

1. A strongly rooted plan: Direct and powerful connection between "A Pedestrian City" and a Sustainable word
2. A powerful plan: Key part of our city's overall design strategy
3. A lively plan: Celebrates our best and current pedestrian environments
4. A directive plan: Clear authority and accountability
5. A forward-looking plan: Ideals and goals translate into tangible results

Review of Pedestrian Crash Data Study

Rob Kaufman, a researcher at Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center, provided a review of the Crash Study he recently completed. The study looked at vehicle type, environmental issues, and speed to assess crash characteristics and patterns.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations:

It's a CrossWALK not a CrossRUN. No pedestrian should be running/jogging across any roadway at anytime

- Pedestrians may run due to fear of being unsafe, or rushing against signals, or just darting out
- Difficult for drivers to keep attention to running pedestrians
- Pedestrian Education: need to obey Pedestrian Signals, only start a crossing with White Pedestrian Signal. Blinking or solid Red, or if a count down starts, means "DON'T START" crossing.

Vehicle speed is associated with increase risk of injury/death, reducing speed limits would lower Pedestrian injury rates.

- Solution, reduce speed limits in significant pedestrian collision areas (e.g., Downtown)

Light truck vehicles (LTV) fleet, - includes SUVs-trucks-large vans

- Owners of LTVs need to be aware that a Pedestrians injury risk is about 3 times greater if they strike a pedestrian.
- Increased speed and LTVs are dangerous mix to pedestrians
- Reduce speed limit and possibly to 20 mph in high pedestrian traffic area (e.g., Downtown)

Intersection crosswalk design changes – Put vehicle stop lines in advance of crosswalks, or move crosswalks back from the intersection

- Design is an attempt to control pedestrian access locations at crosswalks only
- Creates a window of time to start crossings and stop crossings
- Relocating crosswalks would allow driver's to pay attention to traffic and pedestrians separately
- Stop lines for vehicles some distance from all crosswalks will provide more braking distance if needed, allow better visibility of pedestrians, and create some cushion between crosswalks and stopped vehicles

Transit coach operator's training, target bus riders

- Direct connection to riders/pedestrians
- Trend of pedestrian crashes near bus stops
- Refuse riders who have attempted unsafe crossings to catch bus
- Police patrol by riding on buses

Multiple lanes, mid-block crosswalks

- Vehicle stop lines positioned some distance from all mid-block crosswalks provide better visibility for all lanes of traffic and will allow a driver the chance to brake and reduce impact speeds, if necessary.
- Pedestrian education is needed for mid block crossings. The pedestrian must be sure that all lanes of traffic are stopped before crossing at a mid block and should never run out from between parked cars

Comments:

- Is there data for the impact of speed from 30 to 25 miles per hour? Rob: we know that speed is a contributing factor in injury severity in crashes involving pedestrians.
- The relocation of the crosswalks reduces the visibility of the pedestrian and may have other unintended impacts. Also, while considering enforcement of illegal bus crossings, convenience needs to be considered.
- Parking close to intersections needs to be considered because this reduces visibility.
- There should be a change in the law. If cars can go through on yellow, pedestrians should be able to cross on the blinking red hand.

- The word crash should be used rather than collision.
- The term fault is used and is egregious to use related to crashes because it can be interpreted that one got what s/he deserves. Would like to eliminate the word "fault" from pedestrian conversations.

SDOT 2006 Pedestrian Collision Report

Kent Grasso, SDOT staff provided an overview of the Seattle Department of Transportation Pedestrian Collision report. Highlights of the report include:

- In 2006, the number of motor vehicle/pedestrian (mv/ped) collisions and the number of pedestrian fatalities were slightly above the five-year average.
- Pedestrian collisions occurred most frequently in the downtown area and along arterial roadways.
- Pedestrians involved in collisions were approximately twice as likely to be struck in intersections as at mid-block locations.
- Pedestrians between the ages of 15 and 34 were most frequently involved in mv/ped collisions. Pedestrian fatalities, however, were more frequent among older pedestrians. Eighty percent occurred among pedestrians ages 45 or older, an age group that comprises only 34 percent of the Seattle population.
- Males represent a higher percentage of both pedestrians and drivers involved in pedestrian collisions and fatalities.
- More pedestrians were involved in collisions in the winter months. January and November of 2006 saw the highest totals over the last five years.
- Pedestrians were more frequently involved in collisions during the work week than on weekends. Friday saw the highest daily total.
- Pedestrians were most frequently involved in collisions during the evening rush hours. The hour between 5 and 6 p.m. saw the highest total. Fatalities most often occurred later in the evening.
- Pedestrians were most frequently involved in collisions with vehicles traveling forward in a straight line.
- Pedestrians involved in collisions while attempting to cross at intersections were most frequently crossing with the traffic signal.
- Pedestrians were most frequently involved in collisions under clear or partly cloudy weather conditions. Rainy conditions were second most frequent.
- Where the pedestrian was reported to have contributed to the collision, the most common contributing factor was a failure to use a crosswalk. The most common contributing factor for drivers was a failure to grant the pedestrian right-of-way.

Comments:

- Curious to see how the pedestrian volume data that the consultant is collecting will change the way we perceive this information. Would like to see an adjustment of the risk data.
- Blown away by the high number of pedestrians hit while crossing legally.
- Would like to see an assessment of left turns.
- Pedestrians have increased exposure at intersections. Why doesn't the city move towards mid block pedestrian crossings since there is less exposure?

Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process

Tom Hauger, DPD, Comprehensive Plan Manager provided an overview of the Comprehensive Plan update process. The City is required to prepare an annual update in accordance to the state Growth Management Act. Seattle is likely to grow 2500 households each year for the next 20 years. The City wants to locate 75-80 percent of the new housing in Urban Centers and Villages. In order for the Comprehensive Plan to be amended, the City Council must review and approve

all amendments. This year, suggested amendments must be submitted to City Council by February 25 and then they are reviewed according to the following four criteria: .

1. Appropriate
2. Amendment is legal
3. Practical to adopt, the timing is appropriate and there is enough time and to evaluate and vote on it.
4. Not something that is more appropriate to be included at a different level of planning, i.e. Neighborhood Plans.

Council will adopt a Threshold Resolution in April 2008 that forwards the Comprehensive Plan amendments to be considered for adoption in the 2008 update. Council adopts the final amendments in the fourth quarter.

Tom informed the group that the Comprehensive Plan includes a transportation element, and indicated that the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Amendment cycle would be a good opportunity to include policy updates that are generated by the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Comments:

- It was mentioned that the data suggests that the reduction of arterial speeds in the Urban Villages and Urban Centers should be helpful. Unfortunately, speed reductions are not usually covered in Comprehensive Plan Amendments.
- It seems that at the policy level, the speeds can be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan and set the foundation for additional action in other codes and policies.

For more information about the Comprehensive Plan Amendments, go to:

www.seattle.gov/DPD/Planning/Comprehensive_Plan_Annual_Amendments/Overview/

Public Comment

No Public Comment

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

